

October 26, 2007

Mr. Mehdi Morshed  
Executive Director  
California High Speed Rail Authority  
925 L Street, Suite #1425  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Draft Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Program EIR/EIS

Dear Mr. Morshed:

The City of San Jose is pleased to participate in the review of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Bay Area to Central Valley Segment of the California High Speed Train Project. The City of San Jose is a strong supporter of the project and its goals to improve mobility, protect the environment, enhance the economy, and responsibly plan for the future. We commend the California High Speed Rail Authority Board and staff for their leadership in developing this important project.

L016-1

As you are aware, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed and other San Jose representatives have testified at the recent project hearings stating the City's support for the project and the City's strong preference for the Pacheco Pass alignment providing direct service between San Francisco, San Jose/Silicon Valley, Los Angeles and Southern California. There are significant benefits to connecting the State's largest centers of population, business and tourism on a convenient high-speed train line.

Pacheco Pass Alignment Recommendation

L016-2

The Pacheco Pass alignment has many clear statewide advantages over the Altamont Pass alignment that include the following:

- Highest ridership and farebox revenue for travel between Northern and Southern California
- Greatest diversion of air travel demand for major airports in Northern and Southern California
- Provides convenient service to the Monterey Bay area – one of the State's major travel destinations
- Avoids the highly significant environmental disturbance proposed by the Altamont Pass alignment to the sensitive wetland and wildlife habitats at the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge and the southern San Francisco Bay
- Ease of implementation due to integration with the existing Caltrain passenger rail corridor extending for 77-miles between San Francisco, San Jose and Gilroy.



On October 24, 2007, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for the nine-county Bay Area endorsed the Pacheco Pass alignment as the main High Speed Rail express line between Northern and Southern California. We urge the California High Speed Rail Authority to also support the Pacheco Pass alignment.

L016-3

Comments on Environmental Document

City staff has closely reviewed the Draft Program EIR/EIS and we have the following comments to share.

- L016-4      ■      Community Noise Impacts - Implementation of the proposed project alignment (Pacheco Pass alignment) through San Jose is disclosed to have potential noise impacts. We understand that the electrification of the High Speed Trains and the Caltrain service, along with the construction of grade separations and sound barriers are intended to help mitigate these impacts. We look forward to collaborating with the affected San Jose neighborhoods on the development of a satisfactory noise mitigation strategy.
- L016-5      ■      Visual Impacts - One significant project design issue is the development of an acceptable architectural plan for the proposed 45-foot elevated guideway at the approach to the Diridon Station in Downtown San Jose. The elevated alignment is necessary due to the location of existing rail facilities, roadways and waterways. We acknowledge the project's commitment to provide an "attractive design" that is "sensitive to the context". We look forward to close coordination on developing an aesthetic design concept for the elevated guideway so that it is considered to have a "positive" visual impact on the Downtown San Jose skyline.
- L016-6      ■      Diridon Station Expansion - The EIR accurately acknowledges the significance of the Diridon Station in Downtown San Jose as a major regional multimodal hub with direct service throughout the greater Silicon Valley area based on connectivity with Caltrain, ACE Commuter Rail, the Capitol Corridor, Amtrak, VTA buses, light rail, regional express buses (to Santa Cruz and Monterey), as well as planned Bus Rapid Transit lines and BART. A planned Automated People Mover (APM) system at the nearby Mineta San Jose International Airport will help connect Diridon Station passengers with the Airport via connections with BART, Caltrain, light rail and Bus Rapid Transit.

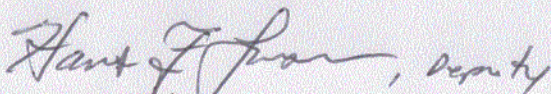
The City has developed a conceptual plan for an expansion of the Diridon Station to accommodate High Speed Trains, as well as an enhanced integration of other transit modes and supporting facilities. We look forward to facilitating a partnership on the Diridon Station expansion with the California High Speed Rail Authority, MTC, VTA, Caltrain and other stakeholders.



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L016-7 | Station Area Design Guidelines - We commend the Authority for including Station Area Development Guidelines as part of the project scope. We support policies that require high density, transit oriented development around the High Speed Train stations as a method to assure “smart growth”, the capture of system ridership, and the promotion of sustainable economic development. In June 2005, the San Jose City Council approved the Diridon/Arena Strategic Development Plan that facilitates expansion of the Downtown San Jose core as a high density mixed use transit village for the area surrounding the Diridon Station. We encourage the Authority to require similar proactive land use planning efforts for other High Speed Train station locations throughout the State.

L016-8 | Again, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the development of the High Speed Train project. We urge your support for the Pacheco Pass alignment and we look forward to continued progress towards project implementation.

Sincerely,

  
for James R. Helmer  
Director of Transportation